

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-05 NSC-05

NSAE-00 PRS-01 SP-02 EB-04 L-01 /043 W

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5936

AMEMBASSY LIMA

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 QUITO 6879

LIMDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR PE EC

SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTRY OUTLINES ECUADOREAN STRATEGY ON AMAZON
ACCESS QUESTION

REF: LIMA 8338

1. SUMMARY: A SENIOR FONOFF OFFICIAL BRIEFED EMBASSY AND DEPT OFFICERS ON GOE'S VIEWS AND STRATEGY ON QUESTION OF PERU-ECUADOR BOUNDARY DISPUTE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF ECUADOREAN SOVEREIGN ACCESS TO THE AMAZON. HE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT DISCUSSIONS SEEMED TO BE MOVING AGAIN AFTER PRESIDENT CARTER'S VERBAL BOOST FOLLOWING 35 YEARS OF INERTIA. ECUADOR WOULD BE WILLING TO CONCEDE RECOGNITION OF RIO PROTOCOL AND TO WORK UNDER ITS RUBRIC TO CLOSE THE BORDER WITH PERU, NEGOTIATING FOR A CORRIDOR TO THE AMAZON (MARANON) THEREIN. NEXT GOE OBJECTIVE IS OBTAINING A
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BILATERAL STATEMENT PLEDGING BOTH COUNTRIES TO CARRY OUT NEGOTIATIONS UNDER THE PRINCIPLES OF RECOGNITION OF THE RIO PROTOCOL AND SOVEREIGN ACCESS. FONOFF DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS WILL BE EASY OR THAT ANY SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE CONCLUDED RAPIDLY. HOWEVER, IT PERCEIVES CERTAIN ADVANTAGES TO PERU IN SUCH AN ACCOMMODATION.

2. AMBASSADOR HERNAN VEINTIMILLA DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS FOR FONOFF, UTILIZED OCCASION OF SEPTEMBER 29 CALL BY ROBERT ALLEN OF INR-RAR/MCA AND POLCOUNSELOR FOR EXPOSITION OF ECUADOR'S ASPIRATIONS AND ASSESSMENTS ON QUESTION OF ACCESS TO AMAZON.

3. VEINTIMILLA EXPRESSED GOE'S GRATITUDE FOR PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENTS ENDORSING DIRECT BILATERAL TALKS BETWEEN ECUADOR AND PERU TO RESOLVE BOUNDARY PROBLEM AND THE FUTURE POSSIBILITY OF ECUADOREAN ACCESS TO THE AMAZON VIA THE MARANON. ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT WASNOT TAKEN AS AN ENDORSEMENT OF THE ECUADOREAN POSITION ON SUBSTANCE, IT WAS CONSTRUED AS A MOST SIGNIFICANT EVEN IN RECOGNIZING THE ECUADOREAN CONTENTION THAT THERE INDEED EXISTS AN UNRESOLVED PROBLEM WHICH ONLY COUNTRY TO COUNTRY TALKS CAN RESOLVE. PERU PREVIOUSLY HAD REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE PUBLICLY THE EXISTENCE OF THE BORDER DISPUTE, BUT AFTER THE WASHINGTON PRESIDENTIAL BILATERALS SEEMS TO ACCEPT ITS EXISTENCE. VEINTIMILLA ADDED THAT ADMIRAL POVEDA'S CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL MORALES-BERMUDEZ IN WASHINGTON DID NOTHING TO DISCOURAGE ECUADOREAN HOPES ON THIS QUESTION. HE OBSERVED PARENTHETICALLY THAT"THIS WAS THE FIRST PRIVATE MEETING EVER REPORTED BETWEEN AN ECUADOREAN AND PERUVIAN CHIEF OF STATE," (WHILE BOTH WERE IN OFFICE), AND IF FOR NOTHING ELSE, THE WEEK IN WASHINGTON WAS WORTH THIS.

4. VEINTIMILLA ADMITTED THAT THE GOE HAD TWISTED AND TURNED
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ON ITS POSITION VIS A VIS THE BORDER AND THE RIO PROTOCOL FOR 35 YEARS AND IT WAS ABOUT TIME FOR ECUADOR TO DEFINE ITSELF. HE ATTRIBUTED THE INCONSISTENCY OF THE ECUADOREAN POSITION TO THE HOPE FOSTERED BY THE 1947 DISCOVERY OF THE RIO CENEPa WHICH RENDERED GEOGRAPHICALLY INEXECUTABLE THE PORTION OF THE RIO PROTOCOL WHICH CALLED FOR A DEMARCATION AT THE WATERSHED OF THE RIO ZAMORA AND RIO SANTIAGO. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY FRUSTRATION AT ECUADOR'S INABILITY TO GET PERU TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DISCOVERY, WHICH FEELING GAVE WAY IN TURN TO AN OVERALL DENUNCIATION OF THE RIO PROTOCOL BY PRESIDENT VELASCO IBARRA IN 1961 AS A TREATY IMPOSED BY FORCE OF ARMS. THIS LATTER, COMMENTED VEINTIMILLA, HAS BEEN TROTTED OUT REGULARLY AS A FACILE DEMAGOGIC DEVICE, BUT IT HAS DONE LITTLE TO RESOLVE THE REAL ISSUES.

5. VEINTIMILLA REPEATED THE FAMILIAR ARGUMENTS ABOUT WHY SOVEREIGN ACCESS TO THE AMAZON WAS SO IMPORTANT TO ECUADOR AND WHY IT WAS CONSIDERED SOMETHING OF A NATIONAL BIRTHRIGHT:

1) THE AMAZON WAS DISCOVERED BY ORELLANA WHO SET OUT FROM QUITO, 2) IT WAS INCLUDED AS PART OF THE QUITO POLITICAL JURISDICTION THROUGHOUT THE COLONIAL YEARS, 3) IT WAS TAKEN

BY FORCE THROUGH THE INVASION OF ECUADOR'S COASTAL PROVINCES,
4) ACCESS WAS DENIED THROUGH THE RIO PROTOCOL WHICH WAS IMPOSED
BY A US ANXIOUS TO RESOLVE SUCH SOUTH AMERICAN PROBLEMS
EXPEDITIOUSLY OUT OF CONCERN FOR THE XIS THREAT. BE THAT
AS IT MAY, THE RECITAL OF THIS LITANY HAS FALLEN ON DEAF
INTERNATIONAL YEARS AND NOW, THE ONLY REALISTIC POSITION THAT
ECUADOR CAN ADOPT, STATED VEINTIMILLA, IS THE RECOGNITION OF
THE RIO PROTOCOL AND A SOLUTION OF THE UNDERMARCATED BOUNDARY
WITHIN THE JURIDICIAL FRAMEWORK OF THE TREATY IN SUCH A WAY AS
TO SATISFY ECUADOR'S HISTORICALLY AND GEOPOLITICALLY JUST CLAIM
TO ACCESS TO THE AMAZON AND THE MARANON. SINCE ARTICLE
VIII-B-1 OF THE TREATY REFERRING TO THE DEMARCATION BETWEEN
THE QUEBRADA DE SAN FRANCISCO AND THE CONFLUENCE OF YAUPI
AND THE RIO SANTIAGO ALONG A NON-EXISTENT WATERSHED IS INOPER-
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ATIVE, THIS CLAUSE MUST PERFORCE BE RENEGOTIATED. IT IS WITHIN
THE FRAMEWORK OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS THAT ECUADOR WOULD PRESS
ITS CASE FOR A SOVEREIGN CORRIDOR TO THE AMAZON-MARANON.
VEINTIMILLA INDICATED THAT FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES SOVEREIGN
ACCESS WOULD MEAN LITTLE STRATEGICALLY OR ECONOMICALLY, UNLESS
ECUADOR WAS ABLE TO ESTABLISH A BEACHEAD DOWNSTREAM FROM THE
PONGO DE MANSERRICHE, THE EASTERNMOST RAPIDS ON THE MARANON.
HOWEVER, HE CONTINUALLY EMPHASIZED THE SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE
OF THE RESTORATION OF A BIT OF THE AMAZON TO HIS COUNTRY.

6. VEINTIMILLA RECOGNIZED THE INTERNAL POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES
THAT PERU MIGHT HAVE IN READJUSTING THE BORDERS THAT IT HAS
ASSERTED FOR 35 YEARS. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE PERCEIVED
IMPORTANT ADVANTAGES FOR PERU IN CONCLUDING A PERMANENT
AGREEMENT WITH ECUADOR. FIRST, WOULD BE THE STABILITY OF ITS
NORTHERN FRONTIER. SECOND, PERU'S AMAZONIAN REGIONS COULD
BE MORE EFFICIENTLY EXPLOITED IF IT HAD ACCESS TO ECUADOREAN
MARKETS AND SUPPLIES WHICH IS ONLY POSSIBLE IF THE BORDER
PROBLEM WERE RESOLVED. THIRD, PERU AND ECUADOR COULD PROCEED
TO USE THE PROTOCOL MECHANISM TO CLEAR UP A NUMBER OF OTHER
BOUNDARY ANOMALIES, WHICH RESOLUTION WOULD TEND TO FAVOR PERU.
HE ALSO OBSERVED RELAXATION OF TENSIONS AND ULTIMATE PEACE
WITH ECUADOR, BY REMOVING A NAGGING POTENTIAL SOURCE OF IRREDEN-
TISM AND REVANCHISM, WOULD ALLOW PERU TO CONCENTRATE ON ITS
OTHER DEFENSE PROBLEMS.

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
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AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

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7. VEINTIMILLA BELIEVED THAT THE BALL HAD BEEN STARTED
ROLLING IN WASHINGTON. POVEDA AND MORELES-BERMEDEZ HAD AGREED
TO HAVE THE MATTER DISCUSSED AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY LEVEL,
WHICH WAS CONSIDERED A BIG STEP FOR PERU. THE NEXT ECUADOREAN
OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO OBTAIN A PUBLIC JOINT STATEMENT IN
PRINCIPLE WHEREIN BOTH SIDES AGREED TO NEGOTIATE THEIR DIFFERENCES
ON THE BASIS OF THE RECOGNITION OF THE RIO PROTOCOL AND AN
ACCOMMODATION OF ECUADOR'S DESIRE FOR A SOVEREIGN ACCESS TO THE
AMAZON. THIS STATEMENT IN ITSELF WOULD BRING ABOUT A DRAMATIC
CHANGE IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE OF THE ANDEAN REGION,
PREDICTED VEINTIMILLA. FINALLY, HE PERCEIVED NEGOTIATIONS
ON THE ACTUAL DRAWING OF THE BORDER AS LASTING UP TO SEVERAL
YEARS. HE ALSO CONCLUDED THAT IF THERE WAS EVIDENCE OF
PETROLEUM IN THE REGION, LITTLE PROGRESS WOULD DU IPIGN MINISTRY, AS
REPRESENTED BY
VEINTIMILLA'S REMARKS, IS UNDERSTANDABLY EXCITED ABOUTWHAT
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IT PERCEIVES AS THE FIRST BREAKTHROUGH FOR THEIR CASE SINCE
1942, WE DO NOT ASSESS MINISTRY OFFICIALS AS BEING UNREALISTICALLY
OPTIMISTIC IN THEIR EXPECTATIONS. WHAT THEY HAVE TRIED TO DO,
HOWEVER, IS TO PARE THEIR DEMANDS DOWN TO THE BONE (IN THEIR
EYES), HOPING NOT TO FRIGHTEN OFF PERU FROM FURTHER DISCUSSIONS
ON THE SUBJECT. THE RECOGNITION OF THE RIO PROTOCOL, FOR
INSTANCE, MIGHT PROVE TO BE A GRAVE DOMESTIC POLITICAL MISTAKE,
BUT THEY ARE AWARE THAT THIS WOULD BE THE SINE QUA NON OF

NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO AN AGREEMENT. AN EXAMPLE OF THEIR TREATING THE ISSUE LIKE SOAP BUBBLE WAS THE INTENSE DISCUSSION WHETHER OR NOT TO INCLUDE A MENTION OF IT IN FOREIGN MINISTER AYALA'S UN ADDRESS LAST WEEK. IT WAS FINALLY DECIDED TO INCLUDE A STATEMENT WITH THE MOST ANDOYNE PHRASING THEY COULD FIND AND THEN CHECK IT IN ADVANCE WITH THE PERUVIANS.

9. WE ARE IMPRESSED BY EMBASSY LIMA'S APPRAISAL(REFTEL) OF PERU'S INTENTIONS AND ITS ESTIMATE THAT PERU HAS RELATIVELY LITTLE INCENTIVE TO RE-OPEN THE QUESTION. NEVERTHELESS, PERU HAS CONSTANTLY DEFENDED ITS ARMS BUILD-UP ON THE GROUNDS OF INSECURE BORDERS AND VORACIOUS NEIGHBORS. IF THIS ARGUMENT IS NOT COMPLETELY DISINGENUOUS, IT SEEMS TO US THAT SOMEONE IN PERU CAN BE PERSUADED TO SEE THE OBVERSE SIDE OF THE COIN: THAT GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS WHICH WOULD DIMINISH THE NEED FOR SUCH MILITARY INVESTMENTS. ON A BASER LEVEL, WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF PERUVIAN MILITARY PLANNERS DID NOT SEE ADVANTAGES IN NEUTRALIZING THE "THREAT" ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER THROUGH BOUNDARY ACCOMMODATION IN ORDER TO CONCENTRATE ON THEIR MORE FORMIDABLE RIVAL TO THE SOUTH.

10. THIS CONVERSATION WAS HELD A FEW DAYS PRIOR TO THE REPORTEDLY 2 1/2 HOUR INTERVIEW THAT FOREIGN MINISTERS AYALA AND DE LA PUENTE CELEBRATED IN NEW YORK. THE BORDER ISSUE WOULD SEEM DIFFICULT TO EVADE DURING THAT LENGTH OF TIME AND
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WE ARE ASKING FONOFF FOR A BREIFING ON WHAT TRANSPIRED.

11. FOR LIMA: THE DISTANCES FROM THE PERUVIAN-CLAIMED DEMARCATION TO THE MARANON SEEM SOMEWHAT SHORTER TO US (40 KMS AT THE CLOSEST POINT AND ABOUT 75 KMS TO THE CONFLUENCE WITH THE SANTIAGO) THAN YOU CITED. WE SUSPECT OUR CARTOGRAPHIC MATERIAL AND SINCE MAPS SHOWING THE PERUVIAN LINE AARE A LITTLE SCARCE HERE, COULD YOU OBLIGE BY SENDING US A GOOD ONE?
BLOOMFIELD

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Message Attributes

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